



Town of Natick

Winter 2013/2014 Newsletter

*Issued by Martha L. White,
Town Administrator*

Natick Board of Selectmen

Carol Gloff, Chair
Joshua Ostroff, Vice Chair
Nick Mabardy, Clerk
Charles Hughes
Rick Jennett

Town of Natick, Massachusetts

13 East Central Street

Natick, Massachusetts 01760

www.natickma.gov

2014 Annual Town Election

The 2014 Annual Town Election will be held on Tuesday, March 25. Nomination forms for town-wide offices are now available; these must be completed and returned to the Town Clerk's office by January 7. Nomination forms for Town Meeting candidates must be returned by January 28 (for incumbent members) or February 4 (for new candidates). Please check the town website for a listing of the town-wide offices that are part of the 2014 Annual Town Election, and call the Clerk's office at 647-6430 if you have any questions.

Selectman Carol Gloff has indicated that she will not be seeking re-election. Ms. Gloff has served on the Board for 9 years, and she previously served on the Finance Committee for 8 years. Carol is also presently serving on the Affordable Housing Trust Board and the Community Development Advisory Committee, and she chaired the most recent Charter and By-Law Review Committee. Carol has volunteered at innumerable Morse Institute Library book sales and Council on Aging holiday dinners, provided transportation to seniors for doctors' appointments, and done much more. Carol has provided grounded leadership through some of the community's most difficult challenges in recent years, while remaining consistently committed to open, honest and ethical government. I know the community joins me in thanking Carol for her years of service, while looking forward to seeing where she will next put her considerable talents.

Deputy Town Administrator Transition

Many thanks and best wishes are also due to our Deputy Town Administrator/Finance Director Michael Walters Young. Michael is relocating to the Nashville area in mid-January to join his wife, who recently started a doctorate program at Vanderbilt University. Since Michael joined us in March of 2008, he has

transformed the Town budget - greatly enhancing the depth and scope of information, brought greater clarity to the budgeting process, and undertaken many analyses to enhance cost efficiencies and improve service delivery. On a personal note, Michael has become a close and valued friend to me and many others who have had the pleasure to work closely with him.

While this transition brings some sense of loss, it also provides us with opportunities. Since Michael took on the responsibility of the position of Finance Director, and given his committed leadership of our finance team and operations, he has had little remaining time to support general operations/non-financial matters. While a sustained strong commitment to finance is essential, we must restore support for the general operations. Thus we have recently hired two accomplished individuals for the positions of Deputy Town Administrator/Finance Director and Deputy Town Administrator/Operations.

For the finance position, we have hired Jeff Towne, who until joining Natick was the Finance Director in Gloucester. Jeff has extensive experience in municipal finance, and is highly regarded as an innovative leader with the drive to enhance a municipality's financial operations. Jeff starts on January 6.

It gives me special pleasure to announce the promotion of DPW Director Bill Chenard to the position of Deputy Town Administrator/Operations. Many residents are familiar with Bill's extensive knowledge of all of our operations, as well as his relentless pursuit of service enhancements, efficiencies and cost savings. Bill started this new role on December 16th.

Meanwhile, we have initiated the recruitment process to fill the critical position of DPW Director.

Free CPR Training

The Natick Fire Department is offering free CPR training to Natick residents and Town employees. It is the Fire Department's conviction that everyone should be trained in this life-saving skill. This free training is funded in part through the support of Town Meeting, which voted to increase the departmental budget to allow for expanded public training programs. Several classes are scheduled between February 10 and June 1; a minimum of 5 people must be signed up for a class to be held. For further information or to register, email Lt. Ron Downing at rdowning@natickma.org.

Marion Street Bridge Update

The Town was recently informed by MassDOT, the agency responsible for this project, that the Marion Street Bridge has officially been approved for funding under "The Way Forward," based on transportation finance legislation signed into law last summer.

The design phase, which is presently underway, is a complex and lengthy process. At this time, it appears that the construction contract is scheduled to be advertised in late November, 2014. If the resulting bidding process goes smoothly, construction could begin in Spring, 2015.

In recognition of the substantial inconveniences caused by this bridge closure, the Selectmen recently inquired about the possibility of a temporary bridge. Town Engineer Mark Coviello was advised by MassDOT that the design, permitting and construction of a temporary bridge would have a similar time frame as the permanent replacement. Accordingly, the Selectmen and Administration are focused on working with MassDOT to keep the design and subsequent construction of the permanent solution on schedule.

Please refer to the transportation page on the Town's web site for updates on this and other transportation improvement projects.

JJ Lane Park Project Update

Great progress has been made recently at this park on Speen Street, and we are hoping to have the project completed in the near future, with a ribbon cutting in the Spring of 2014. Recent progress includes restoration of the pillars at the site's entrance, installation of the binder layer in the parking lot, completion of plantings and preparation of the area for

seed, completion of the sand volleyball court and log trail through the back of the park, and installation of the slabs for the three shade structures. In addition, the Conservation Commission has awarded a contract for construction of the restrooms, and playground equipment has been ordered.

Through this project, an existing Town-owned recreational area is being combined with an adjoining site we are leasing from the state, at a nominal cost of \$3,900/year for 30 years, to create a new 7-acre park. This passive recreational site is a major addition to the Town's inventory of recreational assets, and importantly is in the area of Town most affected by the recent Natick Mall expansion and other development.

New Personnel

With the support of Town Meeting, we recently filled two key newly created positions. Kathleen Lentini was recently hired as Communication/Information Specialist. Kathy, a long-time Natick resident, comes to us with substantial experience in information technology systems, most recently serving as Director of Information Systems for Brown Rudnick, a large Boston law firm. This position will facilitate improvements to our internal and external communication, such as an informative and properly maintained website, as well as improving electronic communication across departments.

Michael Gallerani recently filled the critical role of Economic Development Planner. Michael has varied and extensive experience, including 12 years as Economic Development Director for the Town of Plymouth. The primary purpose of the position is to develop and manage economic development programs and activities to encourage commercial investment and a thriving business community. It is important that we maintain and enhance Natick's strong business tax base, with the benefits and stability this brings to residential taxpayers and to prospective employees.

New Website

The Town's new website at www.natickma.gov is scheduled to launch in mid-December. The website will have a similar appearance, but will be easier to navigate and better organized. The new website will be easier for Town staff to update and maintain. We look forward to your feedback in response to this latest initiative to improve communication with the community.